

Mr. Speaker, in 1990 the gentleman from Florida, Chairman Dante Fascell, put forth a democracy-promoting concept that today stands as a great tribute to his foresight, commitment and leadership. I am pleased to have had the privilege of serving with Mr. Fascell in this chamber and delighted to participate in honoring his accomplishments in this way. His alma mater, the University of Miami, is to be congratulated for its continued contributions through the North/South Center and for the recommendation to rename the North/South Center in Dante's behalf. It is a well-deserved recognition, and one which will make him, and all of us who served with him here in the House, very proud.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPE-  
TITION AND CONSUMER PROTEC-  
TION ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

**HON. BOB GOODLATTE**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 12, 1998*

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this important legislation to address the growing problem of telephone slamming. As the sponsor of an earlier version of anti-slamming legislation with Congressman BASS of New Hampshire, I was pleased to work with the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. TAUZIN, to move this bill through the Congress.

As we are all aware, the problem of slamming has become an epidemic that has affected millions of American consumers. According to the Federal Communications Commission, tens of thousands of Americans are slammed each year. Among telephone users, this is by far their number one complaint. For many folks, telephones and e-mail are more than just communications devices. They can be the only links between a parent and a child halfway across the globe, or a way for old friends separated by the miles to relive old times. Many of our nation's seniors also rely on the telephone as a window to the world around them. It can be a vital connection that enables them to celebrate life with family and friends.

Telephone slammers don't just rob these folks of their hard-earned dollars. They rob them of a source of happiness, a lifetime to family and friends, and replace it with a feeling of anger and frustration at being swindled. The unsavory characters who commit this crime deserve swift and strong punishment. Consumers are in need of stronger protections from these criminals. The passage of H.R. 3888 will help law enforcement put an end to the crime of long distance slamming and e-mail spamming.

Congress gave the FCC significant authority to eliminate slamming as part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Unfortunately, little action was taken by the FCC to exercise this new authority. The legislation we are considering today will remove a significant portion of the flexibility originally given to the FCC. Instead, the bill outlines a more detailed and instructive plan for eliminating the practice of slamming.

The bill gives telephone carriers two choices. The first option is for carriers to regulate themselves. The carriers have said that

they want to eliminate slamming, and we will see if they can live up to their word.

For those carriers that cannot responsibly regulate themselves, they will be subject to the heavy hand of FCC enforcement. I join my colleagues in expressing optimism that carriers will be able to agree on regulations for themselves and stop slamming on their own. I strongly support giving the industry an opportunity to lead on this issue, having long opposed the imposition of burdensome regulations that raise the cost of doing business and serve as a barrier for competition.

For those companies that choose to violate the law, H.R. 3888 provides for significant penalties, including fines as high as \$150,000 for repeat offenders. In addition, slammers will be forced to reimburse their victims for any extra charges incurred as a result of the slamming. This will achieve a balance between the need to give companies the ability to standardize their business practices and the need to allow State officials to enforce State statutes against consumer fraud.

The bill also addresses the growing problem of "spamming," which is the mass distribution of unsolicited commercial E-mail messages to private computers. This annoying practice, which has become more widely used as the use of E-mail grows, is not only disruptive but highly intrusive. H.R. 3888 expresses the sense of the Congress that the private sector should promptly adopt, implement, and enforce measures to deter and prevent the improper use of unsolicited commercial electronic mail.

The characters who commit the crime of telephone slamming are striking at one of our most basic human freedoms—communication. Our ability to communicate with others, free from interruption and through our choice of services, must be protected. H.R. 3888 gives law enforcement the ammunition they need to defend consumers against telephone slammers, and will help bring an end to this private pervasive crime. I want to thank the hard work of the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Telecommunications, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN), and also my colleague from New Hampshire (Mr. BASS), who has long taken an interest in this important issue. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

STATEMENT ON K-12 EDUCATION  
INITIATIVES

**HON. MATT SALMON**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 19, 1998*

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Speaker, the results of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) released earlier this year, which revealed that U.S. 12th graders scored next to last in advanced math and dead last in physics, are a stunning rebuke to the aggressive efforts of the U.S. Department of Education to centralize the American education system. The Department of Education, which promised that the United States would lead the world in math and science by the year 2000, can't even claim bragging rights over war-torn Slovenia. As to reading, which was not measured by TIMSS, 40 percent of fourth graders can't read. Yet, in response to

these epic failures, the education establishment in Washington has come back with demands for more power, more central control, more of the same—although with some new packaging. This is almost the equivalent of exhuming the Kremlin to institute democratic reforms in Russia.

The answer to our educational woes cannot be found in Washington. Washington has spent 30 years and untold billions on a top-down approach to education with little if any success. Spending for education has increased on an annual basis. In fact, according to a report that I commissioned the Congressional Research Service to prepare on a variety of comparative statistics on education in the United States versus other nations participating in the TIMSS assessment, the United States is on the upper end of countries in terms of expenditures per pupil, expenditures per capita, and for average salaries for elementary school teachers. Clearly, our education woes are not for a lack of funding. To improve the educational performance of our children, I believe that we must open the education monopoly at both the federal and state levels, spend education resources more wisely, and return power to parents and communities.

When it comes to returning power to parents and injecting competition and accountability into the public school system, Arizona is at the front of the class. Charter schools—innovative public schools financed by tax dollars but free of most regulations—have flourished. Arizona, which has two percent of the nation's population, is home to one-quarter of the charter schools in existence. (Congress just passed a bill that is designed to increase the number of charter schools.) These schools have fundamentally altered the Arizona education system; traditional public schools now compete with charters for students. The charter school movement has begun the process of having education dollars literally follow the student from school to school. The Arizona legislature also enacted education tax credits last year, which can be used by parents to cover a wide array of education expenses associated with primary and secondary education. The Arizona legislature also enacted education tax credits last year, which can be used by parents to cover a wide array of education expenses associated with primary and secondary education. The education reforms enacted in Arizona are designed to increase parental choice over their children's education and improve education quality. In Arizona, education reform is no longer a spectator sport.

I have introduced two bills with Senator JON KYL that will compliment the new reforms in place in my state and should provide other states with similar opportunities for innovation. One bill, the "K-12 Community Participation Education Act," was inspired by the new Arizona education tax credit and would encourage Americans to get involved personally and to participate in efforts to improve K-12 education. The other proposal, the "Dollars Follow the Student Education Block Grant Act" would block grant certain federal education dollars and permit states to distribute the funds in such a way that money would literally "follow the child" from school to school, which is the manner in which charter schools are funded in Arizona.